

From the desk of **HAROLD BRAZIL**

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DISTRICT TAXES ARE TOO HIGH

At some point, enough is enough. A recent edition of the Washington Business Journal reported that when it comes to taxes, the District is significantly higher than surrounding jurisdictions, and most major cities throughout the country. Councilmember Brazil has again taken a stand on this and says that these increasingly high taxes are just not good for business. “DC restaurant sales taxes, parking taxes, utility taxes... are only making us less competitive. We need to really look for a better solution to our money problems.” Brazil wants to work with the mayor, the White House, Congress and others to obtain a federal payment to compensate the District for the various restrictions the federal government places, both directly and indirectly, on our tax base. Some of the ideas he would like to bring back to the table include a commuter tax (or a federal payment in lieu of the tax) and building height limitations. Brazil believes that these options will allow us to lower taxes on business where high taxes undermine our competitiveness — and give some relief to District residents, who suffer one of the highest tax burdens in the nation.

MASTER BUSINESS LICENSE HEARING

The Council held a hearing this past week to discuss many of the details of the Master Business License (MBL). Councilmember Brazil recently introduced new legislation to reduce the burden of the MBL program on small and home-based businesses. His legislation would increase the dollar threshold for acquiring a MBL from \$2,000 to \$20,000 and extend the deadline for acquiring a MBL until May 30, 2003. This extension will allow more time for businesses to register for the license, and also give the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs time to improve their process for registering businesses and make it more customer friendly. In the end, the Master Business License will streamline business administration by consolidating all DCRA licensing into one easy step. Currently, 37,000 businesses in DC have registered for their MBL online, and more are registering each day. To register, or for more information, go to www.dkra.dc.gov and click on the “Master Business License” link.

REVENUE BONDS FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS

Councilmember Brazil last week chaired a hearing on revenue bond financing for the Arts and Technology Academy, one of several new and innovative charter schools in the District. The Academy is in its fourth academic year, and serves 615 students in grades Pre-K through 6th. The school opened its doors in the Fall of 1999, when a group of dedicated students, teachers, and parents did not want the former Richardson School to be shut down. This group of individuals found that they could keep the neighborhood school intact by establishing a public school charter. In addition to its strong curriculum, the School offers a popular after school program, a parent resource room, and a number of extra-curricular programs. The school would use the bond financing to lower its debt payments by tens of thousands of dollars each year —

(over)

money which would then be used to better serve the students they work with.

PROJECT EASE

A new service made possible by the United Planning Organization, Project Ease, has been created to assist our senior citizens. The services provided by the emergency action switchboard include telephone contact, friendly conversation, comfort and inspiration, assistance with health plans, home safety health aids, assistance with food stamps, and referral and information services. Anyone 50-years of age or older is eligible. DC residents may call Project Ease at 202-289-4750 or check out the website, www.upo.org for more information.

PARTY ANIMALS...SOLD! TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER



From April through September, 100 elephants and 100 donkeys, the Party Animals, brightened the streets of Washington, DC. Now the animals have received permanent homes! The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities held an auction this past week, which raised

money to support the grants and art education programs of the Commission. The auction inventory included the elephant and donkey sculptures, as well as a select variety of small models of the animals. The donkeys and the elephants have been seen at strategic locations throughout the nation's capital this past spring, and admired by

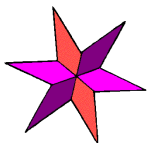
thousands. According to Dorothy McSweeney, Chair of the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities, Party Animals were created to attract visitors to the nation's capital after the events of September 11. Brazil was present at the auction, though he was unsuccessful in his bid to attain a donkey. He said, "The Party Animals were a great way to brighten up the city, and also celebrate the extraordinarily vital artistic life of the Washington community."



Brazil with the Party Animals, L.E. Phant, Attorney at Law, and Pegassass, outside of the DC Chamber of Commerce.

A NIGHT OF FRIGHT!

One of the DC Sports and Entertainment Commission's exciting new events, The Fright House – Extreme Scream Park, is open from October 17-31 at the DC Armory. The brand new, multi-million dollar, live, interactive Halloween adventure will take you on an unforgettable journey through 65,000 square feet of fear. The Fright House features: Uncle Scram's Fright House, CIA Briefing Room, The FBI Freezer, The Mummy's Tomb, Horrorwood Studios Soundstage 13 in 3-D, The Nightmares of Poe: House of Usher, Scarytales in 3-D Theatre, and Heads of State on the Mall. Check out www.thefrighthouse.com for more information on show times and tickets.



GOLD STAR: Crate and Barrel, in Spring Valley gets the gold star this week for hosting last week's fundraiser to support the Food & Friends organization.